DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 658 CG 003 022

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Selective Retention Practices in Secondary School Counselor Education.

South Carolina Univ., Columbia. School of Education.
Pub Date [68]
Note-9p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.55
Descriptors-*Counselor Evaluation, *Counselor Performance, *Counselor Qualifications, *Counselor Training, Faculty Advisors, Secondary School Counselors, Selection

In an effort to determine current practices in counselor education concerning secondary-school counselor selection, a survey was conducted in 1968, using a questionnaire focusing on three areas: (1) pre-admission selection, (2) selective retention during training, and (3) selective-endorsement upon completion of the program. Questionnaires were sent to two counselor training programs in each state. Activities considered regular parts of pre-admission selection include: (1) interviews by 46% of the respondants, (2) tests of academic potential beyond graduate school requirements (34%), (3) personality inventories (12%), and (4) miscellaneous other procedures (40%). Some 72% reported specific points of evaluation during training, and certain self-development opportunities were available: (1) individual counseling (65%), (2) group counseling (78%), (3) both (26%), (4) neither (11%), and (5) other opportunities (17%). Generally, candidates were advised of these opportunities early. Some 81% responded that endorsing graduates was an important function. Over 50% indicated involvement in research to improve selection practices over the currently used tools and guidelines. (BP)

CG 003 022

SELECTIVE RETENTION PRACTICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR EDUCATION

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The problems encountered in establishing counselor selection policies and procedures have been well outlined previously by Hill (1961) and Patterson (1962). For the most part the same problems remain with us today. The ACES Committee on Standards for Secondary School Counselors has suggested that counselor educators develop a "planned program of selective retention" of counselor trainees (1967). A review of the literature reveals that counselor educators are still in search of criteria which show promise as predictors of counselor effectiveness (Munger and Cash, 1966) (Walton and Sweeney). Role studies have resulted in greater clarification of legitimate counselor functions. The results of these studies, however, do not provide us with indices for identifying the characteristics of individuals who will fulfill these functions most effectively.

In an effort to determine current practices in counselor education concerning counselor selection, a survey was conducted during the Spring of 1968. A brief questionnaire was devised which divided the selection process into three parts: 1) selection procedures prior to admission to the program, 2) selective-retention procedures during training, and 3) selective-endorsement procedures which take place after completion of a training program.

An attempt was made to send the questionnaire to two counselor training programs in each of the 50 states (N = 109). Rather than utilizing a random selection of institutions, the survey was directed to counselor education programs whose staff would be most likely to have had experience and opportunity to develop selection policies and practices. Eighty-five percent (N = 93) of the questionnaires were completed and returned. Sixty percent (N = 55) of the institutions responding had 100 or fewer counselor trainees in their program. Twenty-seven percent (N = 25) had 101-200 counselor trainees

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in their program. Reported staff size in full-time or full-time equivalent personnel indicated that twenty-two percent (N = 26) had a staff of three or less, thirty-three percent (N = 31) had a staff of four to six, thirty-three percent (N = 31) had a staff of seven to nine, nine percent (N = 8) had a staff of ten to twelve, and the remaining institutions (N =11) responding had from thirteen to as many as thirty staff members.

Pre-admission policies and practices

Sixty-one percent (N = 57) of the respondents indicated that they did not have a written statement of selective-retention policies to which they adhered for screening applicants. Seventy-four percent (N = 69) of the institutions screen candidates beyond the graduate school requirements.(Table 1)

TABLE 1

Applicants Screened Prior to Admission
in Addition to Graduate School Requirements

Category	Number	Percent
1. Always	51	55
2. Generally	18	19
3. Occasionally	13	14
4. Never	11	12
Total..	93	100

The data reported in Table 2 show that interviews are required by forty-six percent (N = 43) of the institutions and that letters of recommendation, successful teaching experience, and a variety of similar criteria are required by forty percent (N = 37) of those responding. Thirty-four percent (N =32) require tests of academic potential and twelve percent (N = 11) require personality inventories as criteria beyond those established by their graduate school. Slightly more than one quarter of the respon-

dents (N = 24) only occasionally or never utilize criteria or evidence beyond the graduate admissions requirements.

TABLE 2

Activities Considered a
Regular Part of the Selection Process
(N = 93)

Activity	Number	Percent
1. Interview	43	46
2. Tests of academic potential (in addition graduate school)	32	34
3. Personality inventories	11	12
4. Misc. (e.g., letters of recommendation)	37	40

Selective-retention during program

Seventy-two percent (N = 67) of the respondents said that they had specific points in the candidate's program when the staff made progress evaluations. This point typically came approximately midway in the candidate's program. Thirty-one percent (N = 29) indicated that one of the evaluation points was during counseling practicum.

The respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of self development opportunities, if any, that were readily available to their counselor trainees. This data is summarized in Table 3. Individual counseling is considered to be readily available to counselor trainees in sixty-five percent (N = 60) of the programs represented. Group counseling is readily available to trainees in twenty-eight percent (N = 26) of the programs. Both individual and group counseling were reported as available in twenty-six (N = 24) of the programs. While eleven percent (N = 10) indicated that neither type of counseling opportunity was readily available, seventeen percent (N = 16) of the respondents reported

that"other" activities were provided. These other opportunities included sensitivity and encounter groups, seminars apart from regular class activities and integral class activities designed to facilitate candidate growth.

TABLE 3

Readily Available Opportunities
for Trainee Self-Development
(N = 93)

Activity	Number	Percent
1. Individual counseling	60	65
2. Group counseling	26	78
3. Both	24	26
4. Neither	10	11
5. Other	16	17

Seventy-three percent (N = 68) of the respondents stated that counseling was offered as a voluntary activity for their trainees. Twenty-seven percent (N = 25) of the institutions, however, require their trainees to participate as counselees in group or individual counseling or both.

Respondents were asked at what point or points in a trainees's program it is known to him that counseling services are available to him if he desires. The data in Table 4 show that slightly more than half (N = 51) of the trainees were informed early in their program about counseling services available to them. Thirty-nine percent (N = 36) inform their trainees of the counseling services when they seem to have a need. Eleven percent (N = 10) make the services known to the candidate prior to his acceptance into the program as a part of self-screening. In some programs, candidates are admitted into a program after a semester or more of full time study or its equivalent. This procedure allows for a period of time during which self-exploration can begin tak-

ing place. Only four percent (N = 4) of the respondents stated that they never inform candidates of available counseling opportunities. Three and two percent of the respondents, respectively, indicated that this information was made known to their candidates midway or near the end of their programs.

TABLE 4

Trainee Apprised of Counseling Services Available (N = 93)

Category	Number	Percent
1. When necessary	36	39
2. Prior to admission	10	11
3. Early in program	51	55
4. Midway in program	3	3
5. Near the end of program	2	2
6. Never	4	4

When asked to what extent the majority of their candidates voluntarily participate in counseling for their own development, two-thirds (N = 63) of the respondents said that their candidates volunteered for counseling "some" or "little". Almost one quarter (N = 22) said that the majority of their candidates received counseling as a result of voluntarily seeking it.

Eighty-eight percent (N = 82) of the programs provide supervised counseling practicum for all trainees. Five percent (N = 5) stated that most of their trainees completed a practicum. Only one respondent indicated that none of their trainees participated in a counseling practicum.

Evaluation and selective-endorsement

In an effort to determine what is being done to help improve on present practices in counselor selection, three additional questions were asked. The first question revealed that slightly more than half (N = 54) of the respondents were conducting research which may be helpful in the counselor selection process. The second question~~, reported in Table 5,~~ showed that two-thirds (N = 66) of the counselor educators had used the Standards for the Preparation of Secondary School Counselors at least to some extent as a tool for assessing their selective-retention policies and practices. The third question asked to what extent they received requests to recommend or endorse their graduates. Eighty-one percent (N = 75) said that they were "much" involved in endorsing graduates. Only one respondent said that they were not asked to endorse their graduates.

Conclusion

The findings of this survey were intended to be descriptive in nature. The practices of other counselor training programs should be of interest to counselor educators who may be attempting to examine their own policies and practices. In this writer's judgment this is an area which deserves even more study. The fact that more than half of the respondents indicated that they were conducting research which may be helpful in the counselor selection process was encouraging.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Students in Counselor Education Programs
FROM: Director, Guidance Center
RE: Policies and Practices in Candidate Screening

I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of the staff to welcome you as a student in counselor education. We want to help you begin now in developing an identification with the counseling and personnel professions. Often in the beginning courses students will express some feelings of uncertainty concerning their goals or suitability for counseling as a career. Many times individuals are uncertain of the age level or setting in which they might wish to work. These and many related questions are important to each of us. For this reason, I wish to clarify the point of view and practices which we encourage for our students.

Briefly stated, we wished to encourage our students to actively and freely assess their desire and capability for the counseling and personnel professions. We adhere to "selective-retention" policies which are designed to promote self-selection by candidates rather than establishing faculty judgment of suitability. Experience has taught us that some persons who begin the counselor training programs find that they will not be happy in this area. We cannot decide this for them. We hope that we can help them, however, to make a determination early enough in their training to minimize the additional effort and expense required to pursue study in another field.

To accomplish the objectives of a selective-retention policy, I wish to bring your attention to the following:

1. <u>All students in degree programs must request an adviser</u> through the Dean's office, School of Education. Your adviser will help you develop a graduate program suited to your stated interests. This should be accomplished during your first semester of study. The advisers consider this an important opportunity to come to know you and to be helpful to you.

2. At the end of nine (9) semester hours of full-time study or twelve (12) semester hours of part-time study, whichever comes first, <u>you are required to have a conference with your adviser</u> concerning your progress-to-date. We hope that this will give you an opportunity to receive information or feedback which might be helpful to you. You should arrange a brief appointment with your adviser to give him information concerning the courses and instructors which you have had to date. Your second appointment will be arranged with him at that time. These conferences are designed to be helpful to you and in no way are intended as "screening out" procedures. We also want you to share your reactions to the training which you have been receiving. As we come to learn the strengths and shortcomings of the training programs as perceived by our students, we hope to make adjustments which will improve the training.

3. You will be asked to participate in testing and related activities periodically. We wish to emphasize that you are asked but not required to participate in these extra-program activities. All of these activities, e.g., taking a series of inventories concerning counselor characteristics, are designed to provide research data which will be collected over a period of years to help future candidates in our training programs. Individuals will remain anonymous as data are compiled and reported. Without your cooperation we stand little chance of gaining valuable information which is sorely needed now.

4. We encourage all students to participate in counseling as a counselee sometime during their training. The University of South Carolina Counseling Bureau and the Department of Psychology Psychological Services' Center offer free services to University students. Students may call the directors of these centers and identify themselves as graduate students in counseling wishing to take advantage of this service as a part of their traiing program. This can be a valuable experience in learning to perceive, as your future counselees may, the services which you offer.

5. Group counseling, seminars, and similar activities independent of class requirements are conducted throughout the year for students in the various training programs. The opportunities which you have to know the other students and the staff should contribute to the enrichment of your training. We believe that one of our major goals is to help you experience as well as learn about significant conditions in effective human relationships. We will attempt to make opportunities available which will permit this type of experiencing. We hope that you will take advantage of them and, possibly, help promote others.

6. Counseling practicum is, in the minds of most students, the high point of their training. You will have roleplayed, listened and/or watched yourself in simulated counseling, discussed your counseling theory, and generally prepared yourself to be a counselor. As will have been true of all the activities mentioned earlier, supervision in practicum is designed to help you determine ways of being most effective as yourself in the counseling relationship. There is no mold or model which you will be expected to emulate. Supervision will not involve criticism sessions designed to tell you how to counsel. Hopefully, you will have arrived at a point in your professional development as a counselor that you will be able to solicit ideas and suggestions from others concerning alternatives which may be helpful to you in improving your effectiveness. This you will find is a lifelong process for all of us.

One last point, we assume that each student will successfully complete the academic requirements of the training programs. The extent to which an individual can become or does become an effective counselor will involve many other factors. We hope that you will attempt to find ways of going beyond course requirements. One means of doing this is through professional affiliations. I invite you to consider the American Personnel and Guidance Association divisions of most interest to you. I believe that you will find the journals, newsletters, and similar materials well-worth the investment. We have an active State Branch of APGA, the South Carolina Personnel and Guidance Association, which has interest groups in all the major areas of guidance, counseling and personnel work. Your advisor or instructors will be happy to give you more information.

We are pleased to have Guidance Center facilities for training counselors which are second to none in the Southeast. We hope that you come to enjoy them as much as we do.

TJS:ee